

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is microtransit service?

Birmingham On-Demand is an on-demand shared vanpool service. A shared ride is a transportation option that uses a fleet of vehicles to provide a service that has no fixed schedules, no fixed routes, and an infinite number of on-demand stops. Drivers are routed and scheduled through technology that ensures efficient routes based on real-time data. Because this is a vanpool service, you will share a ride with other passengers going in the same direction you are.

## When can I start using the service?

December 3, 2019

## How do I get started?

Download the app by searching Via on the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#). Create an account, and add a payment method by either logging into PayPal or entering your card payment information. Then you will be ready to book a ride.

If you do not have access to the Via app, you can call 205-236-0768 to book a ride and make the payment (on or after December 3, 2019).

## How do I book a ride?

Open the Via app. Enter where you are requesting a ride to/destination. You will receive a notification of your pick-up location, which will generally be on a corner that is within one block walk. Track your vehicle's arrival in real time on the app and receive a text update when the vehicle is close. Walk to designated corner to be ready when the vehicle arrives to be picked up for your ride to your destination.

If you do not have access to the Via app, simply call 205-236-0768 to book your ride on-demand. You will receive instructions on where to meet the vehicle and at what time.

## How much will it cost to ride?

It will cost a flat rate of \$1.50 for all rides throughout the service zone. There is discounted pricing if you purchase a weekly pass (\$14.00) or monthly pass (\$54.00); pass holders can take up to 4 rides per day. If you are booking a ride for yourself and want to book a ride for other passengers who will be riding with you, the cost for each additional passenger is \$0.75.

## How does it work?

Once a ride is booked, Via's technology matches multiple passengers headed in the same direction into a single vehicle that is dynamically routed in real-time, minimizing detours through the use of "virtual bus stops" while providing a highly-efficient rider experience.

## What are the hours of service?

The hours are Monday through Friday from 6 am to 8 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 8 pm.





### Where will I get picked up?

Every corner in the pilot service zone becomes a “virtual bus stop.” Pick-up and drop-off locations are always on corners to ensure the quickest travel times. You will be instructed what corner to go to for pick-up, which generally will be less than a one-block walk.

### What vehicle will I ride in?

All Birmingham On-Demand vehicles are branded vans for easy identification. The fleet is comprised of Mercedes Metris vans that comfortably accommodate up to six passengers each. During hours of operations, there will be four to six vans in service, depending on ridership demand.

### What if I do not have a credit card? Is cash accepted?

No cash transactions will be accepted. You can purchase a pre-paid debit card with cash from local stores, and the information for that card can be used to pay for the service.

### Where can I purchase a pre-paid debit card?

All of the following locations are within the pilot service zone or within walking distance from the zone.

- CVS - 1431 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, Birmingham, AL 35205
- CVS - 2228 Bessemer Road, Birmingham, AL 35208
- Dollar General - 2314 Warrior Road, Birmingham, AL 35208
- Dollar General - 915 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W, Birmingham, AL 35208
- Family Dollar - 200 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Birmingham, AL 35205
- Family Dollar - 1305 Tuscaloosa Ave. SW, Birmingham, AL 35211 (walking distance)
- Family Dollar - 1910 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N, Birmingham, AL 35203
- Family Dollar - 2224 Bessemer Road, Birmingham, AL 35208
- Family Dollar - 521 Center Street, Birmingham, AL 35204
- Graymont Food Mart Convenience Store - 734 Graymont Ave., Birmingham, AL 35204
- Publix at 20 Midtown - 230 20<sup>th</sup> St. S, Birmingham, AL 35233
- Rite Aid - 3209 Ensley Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35208
- Walgreens - 668 Lomb Ave., Birmingham, AL 35211

### What are the accessibility options for this service?

There will be a wheelchair accessible vehicle in service during all service hours. This service is generally corner-to-corner, but if you select the “wheelchair accessibility” option on your profile, the service will be door-to-door.

### Who will be driving me?

Local driver-partners will be hired to drive the vehicles. Every driver goes through a background check, a driver’s record check and an in-person interview before being selected. There is ongoing training and support by Via for all selected drivers.

### What types of services and locations can I access using this service?

- All pick-ups and drop-offs must be in the pilot service zone.
- The pilot service zone map can be viewed on the app or at [www.birminghamal.gov/via](http://www.birminghamal.gov/via).
- Types of uses within the service zone include:





- 47+ Medical Facilities
- 13+ Schools, Colleges/Universities, & Vocational Training Centers
- 3+ Grocery Stores
- 8+ Pharmacies
- 15+ Banks & Credit Unions
- 20+ Hotels
- 10+ Parks

Plus, Birmingham Intermodal Station, government services, community resources, retailers, restaurants, venues, museums, hotels, and more . . .

### **What if I'm not in the zone? What can I do if I'm right outside of the zone?**

During the pilot phase of the project (six months), your pick-up and drop-off locations must be located in the pilot service zone. If you want to walk, bike, or drive to a pick-up point in the zone, you can indicate where that pick-up point would be when you use the app or call-in to book a ride.

### **What should I do if I am having issues with the app?**

You can call or text 205-236-0768 at any time if you are having issues with the app. This number will connect you with the Via Help Center, which is available during operating hours.

### **Why is the City providing this service?**

The City of Birmingham is working in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham to provide multiple transportation options. This service will offer an additional option for on-demand transportation to residents with an emphasis on connecting them with the services they need on a daily basis. Having fewer cars on the road will accelerate the city's ability to make sure that other modes like cycling and walking are safer and that we have more room on the street to enhance connectivity for all modes.

### **How is Birmingham On-Demand being funded?**

The microtransit pilot is being funded jointly by the City of Birmingham and the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham. The City of Birmingham is funding \$250,000 and the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (CFGB) is providing grant funding for \$250,000. Over the course of launching the project, CFGB offered to grant up to a total of \$502,000 if there is demonstrated rider demand in order to ensure quality service.

### **Why is this service called a "pilot?"**

This service is a pilot program because it is being implemented on a limited basis to determine if it would be valuable to have throughout the entire city in a more permanent way. This service is a six-month pilot, meaning that funding has only been secured for six months and the service could be ended when that time is up. Throughout the pilot period, the City will be evaluating data on a weekly and monthly basis to determine how people are using the service and whether the service is truly enhancing accessibility and connectivity across the transportation system inside the pilot zone.

### **Who is Via?**

Via is the service provider for the City of Birmingham's microtransit pilot project. They were selected through a competitive bid process. Via is considered an industry leader in providing Transportation-as-a-Service (TaaS). They have provided more than 70 million rides since 2013 and are in more than 60 cities worldwide.



